



Gray Davis
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse



Loretta Lynch
DIRECTOR

January 19, 2000

Aileen K. Loe
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair, Highway 1 Near Big Sur
SCH#: 1999121074

Dear Aileen K. Loe:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on January 18, 2000, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the eight-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts
Senior Planner, State Clearinghouse

| 1



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
Monterey, California 93940

MBNMS

February 18, 2000

Ms. Aileen Loe
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Aileen:

I am writing to you to provide comments from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary on CalTrans' Initial Study of disposal sites for Highway 1 storm damage repair along the Big Sur coast. Thank you for extending your comment deadline. We are pleased with CalTrans' efforts to proactively address storm damage repair by identifying potential land disposal sites. However, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will not consider authorizing the disposal of road repair debris into the Sanctuary by CalTrans until we have obtained data on sediment input and output rates along the Big Sur coast, as well as data on the biological communities along the Big Sur coast. A study of the sediment budget and a biological assessment for the Big Sur coast will provide the Sanctuary with the proper tools to assess the environmental impacts of CalTrans' maintenance and road repair activities on the marine environment. Without these tools, our office cannot consider a regulatory change to allow disposal of excess landslide and road repair material.

The initial study, and thus the ensuing environmental document, needs to be clear that the disposal plans at the nine proposed sites is just a first step at developing and using onshore disposal sites. It seems to us that CalTrans has selected these nine sites because they are very close to Highway 1, cheap (if not cost-free) to use, and appear to be relatively devoid of environmental issues, thereby making mitigation unlikely and facilitating use of a Negative Declaration. The Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP) will, or at least should, provide a more creative, whole-project view towards reducing the need for material disposal and developing further onshore sites that may need more mitigation, planning, and perhaps cost. Nonetheless, our comments below suggest additional work could be done at this stage to expand the present nine disposal sites. Also, if we have misunderstood what the CHMP will be accomplishing and its relation to the nine sites, please inform us promptly.

The following comments identify concerns as they relate to our agency.



On page 16 of the initial study, ocean disposal is discussed as an alternative still under consideration. In this paragraph, the Sanctuary's regulations are described incorrectly. The paragraph should be rewritten as follows, with edits shown by strike-through and underline:

"Disposing of material in the ocean, or placed above the shoreline but in a manner where it would subsequently enter the ocean, is regulated by the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. ~~Disposal may be authorized by the National Marine Sanctuary where the activity can be shown to be consistent with natural coastal processes.~~ Disposal is strictly prohibited by the regulations for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. A process exists whereby the Sanctuary may consider a regulatory change. The information necessary for that process includes scientific analysis that evaluates if the disposal of sediment is consistent with natural coastal processes at specific sites, and that shows sediment disposal will have only negligible short-term adverse effects on Sanctuary resources and qualities. ~~Evaluating this properly will involve interagency analysis of the natural sediment regime and site-specific conditions along the Big Sur coast.~~ This effort will be conducted as an element of the Coast Highway Management Plan."

The study has identified nine site recommendations for the disposal of sediment. On page 14, and in Table 4 on page 15, CalTrans describes some of the sites not selected for disposal at this time. We ask that you put additional work into those sites, in order to provide additional disposal capacity. In particular, the description of Coffeeberry Flat suggests that you need to do some archaeological work, and perhaps consultation with Native Americans. Typically, the most preferred mitigation measure to coastal cultural sites is to cap them and not disturb them. That is exactly what the disposal program would do. Therefore the Coffeeberry site could be used, and thus evaluated, in this environmental document. Furthermore, it is not at all clear why all of the U.S. Forest Service sites were not considered further. The Forest Service proposed the sites, and as a resource management agency and land steward, their proposal for use of those sites ought to be considered more fully. If additional mitigation is necessary, it would be appropriate to develop that now. Lastly, you appear to have made several onshore sites off-limits because of conflicts with the Federal Endangered Species Act, and other environmental sensitivity. Bear in mind that such reasoning needs to be applied to ocean disposal, and even near-ocean disposal with regards to violation of Sanctuary regulations, which are also governed by a federal statute, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Intertidal and nearshore ocean resources are also environmental sensitive to disposal of CalTrans' excess sediment.

On page 65, the study identifies the regulatory agencies and the associated sites that would require their permit and/or authorization. For consultation with the Sanctuary, the study lists three sites -- Garrapata #1, 3 and 6. Garrapata #5 is a serious site to omit. Not only does it appear that it is the closest site to the Sanctuary's boundaries, it appears to be the same site that I identified as a site for Sanctuary consultation in my August 23, 1999 letter to you. It also appears to be the same site you refer to in your letter dated February 11, 2000 to Tom Moss, where you describe, "...extensive sloughing over approximately 90% of the slope face and 1-2 feet thick on the steep, lower portion of the fill." I realize that you propose to use this site to

dispose of an additional 5,000 cubic yards and that you have already disposed of 45,000 cubic yards of material. Please list all four Garrapata sites for consultation with the Sanctuary, including site #5.

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Additionally, regarding Garrapata site #5, Sanctuary staff conducted site visits on February 15, 2000 and noted that the fill CalTrans placed on the lower, most westerly slope, without Sanctuary authorization and adjacent to the beach, is cracked and eroding into the Sanctuary, and that very little vegetation exists on this slope. This erosion has occurred in less than six months and suggests that CalTrans' current plans for compaction, erosion control and revegetation are not successful. Since it appears you will be relying on these methods as mitigation measures (ER/SED-1; BIO-6; BIO-9), impacts may not, in fact, be reduced to insignificant with these measures. The erosion of Garrapata site #5 also demonstrates why CalTrans needs to consult with the Sanctuary on virtually all land disposal west of Highway 1.

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Another disposal site that may need Sanctuary consultation is the 1983 Extension at post mile mark 53.6. It is difficult to determine from the figures if disposed sediment at this location has the potential to erode into the Sanctuary. In particular, the statement on page 22 concerns us: "The drainage downslope from the site flows into dune sands on the beach and not directly into the sea." Please provide us with further details on this site, such as its proximity to the Sanctuary's boundaries, and whether disposed sediment has the potential to enter the Sanctuary indirectly.

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On page 17, the section on selection and use of a pre-approved disposal site states that CalTrans will provide agency notification when a site is to be used and that no subsequent action or approval would be required, unless there is a "substantive" change in circumstances. "Substantive" must be clearly defined.

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On page 18, the section on monitoring identifies the need for internal coordination and communication within CalTrans. It is critical that the CHMP Project Manager take proactive measures to ensure that CalTrans field staff and contractors are properly monitoring the sites for compliance with the conditions for the sites' uses, and that there is no break in the communication channels with CalTrans and among the appropriate regulatory agencies. This issue is of particular concern to our agency. During the February 15, 2000 site visits conducted by our staff, we discovered and documented cases of sidecasting by CalTrans. At least two locations, sidecast material, including anthropogenic material, was clearly down slope of CalTrans road work on its way to passing within our boundaries.

Also regarding the section on monitoring, the study states "remedial measures will be outlined for cases where desired objectives are not met." Mitigation for environmental damage as a result of CalTrans' error must be discussed here. Additionally, each site needs a detailed description of compaction, erosion control and re-vegetation methods.

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On page 20, an outline of interim procedures prior to project approval is discussed. Notification of regulatory agencies is listed as a step CalTrans will take if storm-related events occur prior to project approval. We want to emphasize that this is a critical step CalTrans must take. At this moment, I believe there are at least three major landslide events that have occurred on the Big Sur coast within the past few days. We are anticipating an update from CalTrans on their activities related to these events and expect an advanced notification of any construction, grading, and fill activities on the west side of Highway 1.

In conclusion, our agency continues to support CalTrans efforts to identify land disposal sites for sediment generated by maintenance and repair work. However, the limited capacity the proposed sites allow points to the need for CalTrans to develop long term engineering solutions to minimize road repair and reconstruction, such as the development of criteria for replacing roads with bridges at re-occurring wash-out areas, and constructing tunnels in place of road cuts. As we have continually emphasized throughout the CHMP process, ocean disposal should be viewed by CalTrans as a last resort. We are determined to eliminate the mindset of "out of sight, out of mind" which fosters the belief that dumping excess dirt and other debris in the ocean is the most efficient and economically beneficial method of disposal. Studies have proven that there are significant threats to the marine environment resulting from marine disposal. Not only is the marine environment vital as an aesthetic and biological resource, it is critical to California's economy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Douros".

WILLIAM J. DOUROS
Superintendent

cc: California Coastal Commission



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Los Padres
National Forest
Monterey
Ranger District

406 South Mildred
King City, CA 93930
(408) 385-5434
TDD: (408) 385-1189

File Code: 1500

Date: February 2, 2000

Aileen Loe
Senior Environmental Planner

RE: Initial Study, disposal sites for storm damage repair on Highway 1 near Big Sur.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Initial Study, dated December 1999. At this time I will limit my comments to the two proposed sites on National Forest System lands located within the Willow Springs Maintenance Area, Willow Springs (P.M. 10.4) and Tree Bone (P.M. 11.0). You may anticipate that these comments would also apply to potential new sites proposed on National Forest System lands.

1) Construction of new roads: Current policy and management direction is to not authorize the construction of new roads. I urge you to develop other alternatives that accommodate your access needs.

2) Compliance with the Endangered Species Act: To expedite future permit processes, I recommend completion of any necessary consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

3) Revegetation: The Forest Service concurs with your proposed revegetation and planting methods using locally collected native seed. From past experience, a 5 year monitoring plan is necessary to assure establishment of desirable vegetation.

4) Non-native invasive plants: Your revegetation plan on the disposal sites is the first step in preventing establishment of new infestations. As a second step, and to further mitigate the site disturbance, the Forest Service recommends a 500 foot wide 'weed free' buffer zone around the perimeter of the disposal site. This weed free zone would help prevent adjoining invasive weeds from spreading onto the disposal site and also help mitigate loss of threatened or endangered species habitat.

I hope these comments are helpful in your initial study. Prior to final approval of disposal sites on National Forest System lands, we will have to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). I look forward to collaborating further with you on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Bruce Emmens

for BRUCE EMMENS
District Ranger



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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 333 MARKET STREET
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105-2197

REPLY TO
 ATTENTION OF:

JAN 13 2000

Regulatory Branch (1145b)

SUBJECT: File No. 24894S

Ms. Aileen Lowe
 Caltrans, District 5
 50 Higuera Street
 San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Dear Ms. Lowe:

Your request for comments on the "Initial Study, Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair, Highway 1 near Big Sur" concerning the stretch of Highway 1 between the San Carpoforo Creek Bridge in San Luis Obispo County and the Carmel River Bridge in Monterey County was received on December 21, 1999 by your notice dated December 1999.

All proposed discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States must be authorized by the Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. 1344). Waters of the United States generally include tidal waters, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), and wetlands.

Your proposed work appears to be within our jurisdiction and a permit may be required. Application for Corps authorization should be made to this office using the application form in the enclosed pamphlet. To avoid delays it is essential that you enter the file number at the top of this letter into Item No. 1. The application must include plans showing the location, extent and character of the proposed activity, prepared in accordance with the requirements contained in this pamphlet. You should note, in planning your work, that upon receipt of a properly completed application and plans, it may be necessary to advertise the proposed work by issuing a public notice for a period of 30 days.

According to the information provided, it appears that disposal at the Willow Springs, Pt. Sur Naval Facility, and Garrapata #5 sites will not place dredged or fill material within a Water of the United States. Therefore, disposal of material at these locations is preferred over the use of the Tree Bone, Gurries, and Garrapata #1, 3, and 6 sites.

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It is unclear from the information provided, how the use of the 1983 Extension site would impact jurisdictional waters. Page 25 of the study states that the site contains an eroded gully and seasonal wetlands. However, this site is not on a list of sites, requiring 404 permits (page 65). Does this mean that all material disposed at this site shall be placed in uplands? We request that you clarify this before submittal of a permit application.

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If you have any questions, please call Philip Shannin at telephone 415-977-8445. Please address correspondence to Regulatory Branch, and refer to the file number at the head of this letter.

Sincerely,

Edward J. A. Wylie

CC Calvin C. Fong
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Enclosure



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Central Coast Region



Winston H. Hickox
Secretary for
Environmental
Protection

Internet Address: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/~rvqcb3>
81 Higuera Street, Suite 200, San Luis Obispo, California 93401-5427
Phone (805) 549-3147 • FAX (805) 543-0397

Gray Davis
Governor

February 14, 2000

Aileen Loe
Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans, District 5
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 549-3103

Dear Ms. Loe:

INITIAL STUDY - CALTRANS DISPOSAL SITES FOR STORM DAMAGE REPAIR ON HIGHWAY 1 NEAR BIG SUR (SAN LUIS OBISPO, MONTEREY COUNTIES)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on your December 17, 1999 Initial Study and proposed Negative Declaration regarding the proposed project. In general, we share the concerns discussed in the Marine Disposal of Landslide Debris along Highway One: Environmental Risk Assessment and Monitoring Protocols Booklet and support its recommended monitoring and impact minimization strategies. We offer the following comments:

Purpose and Needs

The project's "Purpose and Need" is "...to designate disposal sites for soil and debris generated by naturally occurring events, such as landslides, allowing for the continued safe operation maintenance of Highway 1 in the coastal area of Big Sur." The highway and its maintenance undoubtedly exacerbates erosion and landslides. CALTRANS will likely dispose of more soils than would otherwise occur naturally. The initial study and proposed negative declaration did not appear to accurately describe the environmental setting.

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Permit and Certification Issues

For any project requiring an Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, including reporting and non-reporting Nationwide permits, the applicant must also apply for Section 401 Water Quality Certification. For the project to proceed, the Regional Board must either certify that the 404 permit complies with state water quality standards or waive such certification. Any project, which involves disturbance of a streambank or riparian area must also obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement from California Department of Fish and Game.

Wetland and Permanent Loss Issues

Wetlands enhance water quality through such natural functions as flood and erosion control, streambank stabilization, and filtration and purification of contaminants. Wetlands also provide critical habitat for hundreds of species of birds, fish and other wildlife, offer open space, and provide many recreational opportunities. Water quality impacts occur in wetlands from construction of structures in waterways, from activities such as dredging and filling, and altering drainage to wetlands. The State of California's

California Environmental Protection Agency



Recycled Paper

Wetlands Conservation Policy requires no overall net loss in wetlands in the short-term and a long-term net gain of wetlands. All projects must be evaluated for the presence and protection of jurisdictional wetlands. According to the California Wetlands Conservation Policy the project must ensure no overall net loss and achieve a long-term net gain in the quantity, quality, and permanence of wetland acreage and values in California. The Regional Water Quality Control Board prefers to avoid any loss of wetlands. If loss is unavoidable, a mitigation plan should be developed and implemented.

Some aspects of the project would result in a permanent loss of a surface drainage way and any attendant riparian features. The proposed mitigation BIO-10 lacks sufficient detail to assure proper mitigation. BIO-10 proposes to restore losses at unidentified nearby or offsite locations at an undetermined ratio. It is not clear that such restoration opportunities are available. During the CEQA process existing wetlands sites need to be characterized, potential restoration sites should be identified and characterized, restoration ratios should be established based on size and value, and monitoring and maintenance schedules should be established.

Culvert Issues

The Initial Study proposes, in part, to place culverts into gullies then fill over the culverts. The culverts will accommodate 50-year storms. The mitigation measures do not discuss the maintenance and monitoring of the culverts. The culverts are likely to receive soil, rock and debris that may cause clogging. Any clogging of the culverts could erode the fill and impact downstream waters. The draft Negative Declaration should address the maintenance, such as the cleaning and unclogging of the culverts, as well as address the development of a monitoring program for the culverts. If the culverts were to clog, water should be diverted around the fill site as recommended in the Marine Disposal Booklet. Should fill materials erode, the draft Negative Declaration should discuss downstream affects. The fill sites should not be above sensitive areas.

If you have any questions or require application packets, please call Tom Kukol at (805) 549-3689.

Sincerely,


Roger Briggs
Executive Officer

cc: State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
MONTEREY DISTRICT
2211 GARDEN ROAD
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93940
(408) 649-2836



February 23, 2000

Aileen K. Loe, Project Manager
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415

RE: Initial Study – Disposal Sites for Storm Repair

Dear Aileen:

I have reviewed the above referenced document. It is quite thorough and complete. You and your team have done an excellent job. In addition to the comments I have expressed to you on the phone, please consider the following changes and additions to the report.

- Page 13 under Pt. Sur Naval Facility please change sentence (underlined words) to read: "State Parks proposes earthen berms to shield two existing buildings from the" Also, under Proposed use, we have no restriction on the type of material disposed there, except that it should not contain significant amounts of rock, boulders, or construction debris or highway waste materials. Native soil with or without organic material is fine. 1
- Page 13 and 14. Last sentence on page 13, please change sentence to read: "Each of these sites was proposed by State Parks to repair areas degraded by human-caused erosion and to provide overall" In order to fully achieve the stated objectives, as described above, it is in State Parks interest to increase the amount of material proposed for disposal in each of the identified disposal sites located in Garrapata, specifically at Garrapata #1 and 3. These sites are significantly degraded. More extensive filling in each area would provide a means to restore the landform and provide a continuous coastal trail (one that is not located immediately adjacent to the highway). I do not believe that there are any overriding environmental issues at either of these sites that would restrict their use as proposed. I believe that Tom Edell would concur with this opinion; we discussed each site in the field last month. Unfortunately, because of rain, I was only able to review one site (Garrapata #1) with Steve Hendrickson. Provided that Steve agrees, please increase the capacities of Garrapata #1 and 3 to 15,000 cubic yards each. 2
- 3

- Page 14. We believe that Garrapata #4 should be reconsidered as a suitable disposal site. It is very similar to Garrapata #5; about the same size with a perennial stream, severely degraded slopes on the north side, and some areas of intact native vegetation on the south side, including a large number of buckwheat plants. Surveys to determine the presence or absence of Smith's blue butterfly should be conducted before a final decision is made concerning the final use of this area. Regardless of the outcome of the surveys, mitigation similar to that proposed for Willow Springs and Tree Bone may be appropriate if this site is included. The recent growth of some wetland plants in the streambed should not be sufficient reason alone or in combination with other factors to exclude this site. The entire stream channel was scoured clean of all vegetation during the winter of 1997-98. And, bulldozers were actively working in this area, from the toe of the fill to the dropoff above the beach, during the initial use of this area as a disposal site. We request that this site be included in the list of proposed disposal sites. It has a capacity of approximately 40,000 cubic yards. 4
- Page 14. We probably should remove Garrapata #5 as a site for additional fill disposal. After regrading is completed to flatten the slopes, in conjunction with repairing recent slippage, there is probably not enough space remaining to justify disturbing the area again. The physical and biological descriptions and analyses of this site presented later in the report should also be removed. 5
- Pages 18 and 52. Concerning the recommendation that local seed be used for revegetation of disposal sites, I have two comments. First, although implied, I think the recommendation should state "Use locally collected seed consisting of species that are representative of the native plant community surrounding the effected area." Also, this recommendation should be required – no exceptions. Words like "whenever possible" (page 18 and 52) and "to the extent possible" (page 52) opens the door for exceptions and lame excuses, allowing the use of exotic or non-local native seed. The collection of native seed or cuttings from the local flora for revegetation of disposal sites should be a strict requirement, if we're sincere about maintaining the genetic integrity of the local flora. 6
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- Page 18 and 53. Along with maintaining seedlings for a period of 3 years, exotic invaders should be eradicated on an annual basis for at least 3 years following seeding/planting. During a 3 year maintenance period, brief annual reports should be prepared for each treatment site, documenting progress on achieving the objectives of the revegetation effort. During annual inspections, a qualified individual should assess such elements as 1) plant composition, density and percent cover; 2) the condition of the plants, paying particular attention to plant 8

mortality or any deficiency in the quality and quantity of the landscape; 3) signs of damage from natural or human-related causes; 4) status of exotic vegetation, and; 5) status of species of special concern (buckwheat, etc.). When deficiencies are identified, appropriate remedial measures should be described and carried out prior to the next annual monitoring inspection. This information should be included in your report as part of the description of the revegetation program.

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- As I've discussed with you before, I think the individuals involved in preparing the specifications for landform restoration and revegetation at the disposal sites should monitor implementation more closely. "Trust but verify," as Ronald Reagan liked to say, is essential for ensuring that what actually happens is close to what was agreed to.

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Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to comment on this important document.

Sincerely,



Thomas K. Moss
Resource Ecologist

Copy: Lynn Rhodes, Superintendent, Monterey District

M e m o r a n d u m

To : Ms. Aileen Loe
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Date: January 10, 2000

From : Department of Fish and Game - Post Office Box 47, Yountville, California 94599

Subject: Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair, Highway 1 near Big Sur,
SCH Number 99121074, Initial Study, Big Sur Region, Monterey County

Department of Fish and Game personnel have reviewed the Initial Study for the proposed storm damage repair disposal sites on Highway 1 near Big Sur. The project is a request to create nine soil disposal sites along Highway 1 between the Carmel River and San Carpoforo Creek in northern San Luis Obispo County. The disposal sites will be used to store soil and debris generated by naturally occurring events on Highway 1. The sizes of the disposal sites will range from 0.1 to 5.7 acres.

Based on the information provided in the initial study, Caltrans will need to obtain streambed alteration permits pursuant to Section 1601 of the Fish and Game Code at five disposal sites. Due to a recent court order, the Department is required to conduct an environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) prior to issuing a streambed alteration permit. The CEQA document must include mitigation measures to offset any potential impacts to streams and associated riparian habitat which cannot be avoided. Several potential steelhead streams could be affected. Measures should be incorporated into the project to prevent fine sediments from entering these streams. The Department will utilize existing CEQA documents if they are determined to be adequate. However, all of these documents will need to be certified prior to the issuance of the permit.

I have included a Streambed Alteration Permit application with this package. If you have questions, or need additional information, please contact Mr. Chuck Marshall, Associate Fishery Biologist, at (805) 237-9538; or Mr. Carl Wilcox, Environmental Program Manager, at (707) 944-3525.



Brian Hunter
Regional Manager
Central Coast Region

Enclosure

MONTEREY COUNTY

PLANNING AND BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT

P. O. BOX 1208 SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93902 (408) 755-5025



WILLIAM L. PHILLIPS

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING INSPECTION

January 31, 2000

State of California
Department of Transportation
Attn: Aileen K Loe
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, Ca 93401

Subject: Disposal sites for storm damage repair
Highway One, Big Sur

Dear Ms. Loe:

Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department has reviewed the initial study prepared for disposal sites for storm damage repair along the Big Sur Coast and has the following comments:

The proposed disposal sites are located in the Big Sur Area of the Coastal Zone and are subject to the policies of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan and the regulation of the Monterey County Implementation Plan. Grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials, including excavation and filling which requires environmental review pursuant to the Monterey County CEQA Guidelines is defined as development. Development in the Coastal Zone requires a Coastal Development Permit pursuant to section 20.70.120 of the Coastal Implementation Plan. Emergency permits can be granted if the situation requires action more expeditiously than allowable under normal permit procedures. I assume the initial study is being prepared for a Coastal Development Permit that pre-designates disposal sites during emergencies.

Section I.G.3 (Declared Emergency) of the initial study indicates most agencies have the ability to invoke an emergency provision and that in some cases authorization for Coastal Development Permits can be granted with a phone call. Although in the past, emergency work has been granted with a phone call, normally a follow-up emergency permit is required. This should be noted in this section of the initial study.

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Section II.A.2.b (Maintenance) of the initial study indicates that the proposed project assumes continuation of existing practices for temporary stockpile areas along roadways turnouts. Use of turnouts could affect visitor vehicular, pedestrian or visual access to the coast, especially if these grading spoils are to remain in place during the peak visitor season. In addition, additional runoff from spoil site could potentially impact tidal pools. These issues should be analyzed in the initial study.

3

WILLOW SPRINGS MAINTENANCE AREA

Willow Springs (P.M.10.4)

What road improvements are proposed at this site? Will additional road grading or widening be required? Will the road be visible from Highway 1? Policy 3.2.3.A.4 states that new roads, grading or excavations will not be allowed to damage or intrude upon the critical viewshed. The critical viewshed is defined as everything within sight of Highway 1 and major public viewing areas including turnouts and beaches.

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Will fill material be placed on slopes of thirty percent or greater? If so, a Coastal Development Permit is required to allow for development on slopes greater than thirty percent. The Coastal Development Permit can only be granted when no alternative areas exist, or the development better achieves the resource protection objectives and policies of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan. If possible, please provide evidence to support granting a permit.

5

This area is shown on the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan as containing or located within environmental sensitive habitat (ESH). The initial study indicates that approximately 1.28 acres of Coastal scrub is proposed for removal. Coastal scrub is considered ESH. Coastal regulations state "Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas." Section 20.145.040.B of the Coastal Implementation Plan states that grading and filling shall be prohibited in ESH if it cannot be determined that the development impacts cannot be reduced to a level which assures the long-term maintenance of the habitat.

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Section 20.145.040.C.1g of the Coastal Implementation Plan states that "Development and land use activities in areas of natural grassland shall not be permitted to adversely impact the long-term maintenance of the habitat. The allowable uses in natural grasslands include managed grazing, low-intensity recreational, and residential uses." If possible, please provide evidence addressing both sections and that the proposed activities and condition/mitigations will assure long term maintenance of the natural grasslands and coastal scrub habitat.

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Tree Bone (P.M. 11.0)

It is indicated in the initial study that one notable feature at this site is a depression which contains water for part of the year. The initial study indicates that a .65-acre seasonal

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pond is proposed as a disposal area. Will filling the seasonal pond require the removal of riparian habitat? Riparian habitat is considered ESH and subject to the regulations as stated in the previous paragraph. In addition, Section 20.145.040.C.1.c of the Coastal Implementation Plan states, "development and land uses shall not adversely impact the long-term maintenance of the habitat nor diminish the surface flow to a level that causes loss of the riparian habitat or wildlife habitat." Will the storm water be diverted to elsewhere on the site? If so, where? What impacts will occur from the diversion?

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The initial study indicates that the proposal for this site includes re-establishing a secondary access road to the south. It appears from the photographs contained in the initial study that the secondary access road would be located in the critical viewshed. Section 20.145.030.A.2.c of the Coastal Implementation Plan prohibits development of new roads in the critical viewshed. Please provide evidence that the proposed road is not in the critical viewshed.

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BIG SUR MAINTENANCE AREA

1983 Extension (P.M. 53.6)

The proposal will require the loss of an acre of Central Coastal Scrub, .15 acres of Arroyo Willow riparian communities, 0.10 of Windrows and .05 acres of Waters of the United States, as such, are subject to the regulations as stated above under the Willow Springs Maintenance Area.

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Road improvements within the critical viewshed shall not be allowed, pursuant to the policies of the Big Sur Land Use Plan, as described similarly under the Willow Springs Area above.

Pt. Sur Naval Facility (P.M. 53.8)

Proposed berming could potentially impact views from Highway 1 to the Ocean. Section 20.145.030.A.1. of the Coastal Implementation Plan states that "ocean views from Highway 1 shall not be obscured by artificial berming, mounding, or landscaping." Please provide evidence how this parcel will not conflict with this policy.

11

MONTEREY MAINTENANCE AREA

Gurries (P.M. 63.0)

Garrapata # 1 (P.M.) 66.4)

Garrapata # 3 (P.M.) 65.3)

Garrapata # 5 (P.M.) 66.3)

Garrapata # 6 (P.M.) 67.0)

Will fill materials deposited on the west side of Highway 1 effect tidal pools?

12

All the aforementioned sites, except Garrapata #5 require the removal of ESH. As previously stated, Coastal regulations state that "environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas. Any permit application that proposes removal of ESH generally receives a recommendation of denial from staff unless evidence can be provided that no other alternative exists.

13

SIGNIFICANCE CHECKLIST

The Hydrology and Water Quality section indicates that the 1983 Extension, Gurries and Garrapata (sites #1,3 & 6) proposals would require changing the flow pattern from surface to subsurface. Has diverting the drainage around the proposed fill area been analyzed as a possible mitigation to minimize the impacts on riparian habitat, rather than changing the flow pattern from surface to subsurface?

14

The "environmental checklist" biological section does not include any discussion or mitigation for the Gurries site.

15

Mitigations measures BIO 2, 5 9 and 10 should include a success criteria.

16

Mitigation measure BIO 9 biologist should determine if plants or seeds are appropriate for the specific site. Big Sur regulations require that only local native plant species be utilized.

17

Mitigation measure BIO 10- states that restoration of wetlands and riparian habitat should occur within the affected drainages or at nearby offsite locations yet to be determined. To determine if the mitigation is feasible, proposed sites should be identified in the initial study.

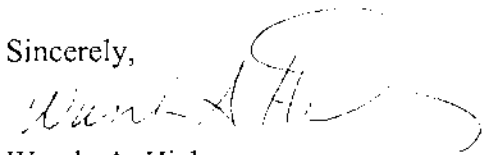
18

Although the initial study includes some discussion of potential impacts associated with truck traffic, it does not include any discussion of potential impact during peak visitor season and possible mitigations.

19

If you have any questions regarding the comments, please feel free to contact me at (831) 755-5877.

Sincerely,



Wanda A. Hickman,
Associate Planner



rita t <aframebigsur@yahoo.com> on 02/11/2000 04:12:21 PM

To: Aileen_Loe@dot.ca.gov
cc: aframebigsur@yahoo.com
Subject: Comments on Big Sur Disposal Plan

Responsible Consumers of the Monterey Peninsula

POB 1495, Carmel, CA 93921 - 831/624-6500

Feb 10 2000

Comments on: Big Sur Landslide Dirt Dumping
(aka Disposal Sites for Storm Damage)

We object to this project and to the Initial Study and Negative Declaration.

We request you prepare an EIR because of the individual and cumulative significant environmental impacts. This proposal requires an EIR both legally and with any measure of common sense.

1

As I teach courses in environmental impacts, and have read and commented on hundreds of EIRs and EISs, and had my opinions confirmed by California Courts, you should consider these the opinions of an expert.

The removal of several hundred thousand cubic yards of soil and rock is in itself a significant environmental impact triggering an EIR. The Neg. Dec never seems to even attempt to estimate the quantity or rate of dirt that would be required, making the sizing of placement areas completely subjective. If you don't provide us with a proper diagnosis, how can we evaluate the solution? Answer - we can't. Please provide us with an adequate project description including the quantification of the problem. Include a margin of error.

2

The potential loss of wetlands is not merely a significant environmental impact - it is prohibited by the Coastal Act because it is ESHA (Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area). PRC 30000 et seq.

3

If you interpret Big Sur LCP as not similarly prohibiting loss of ESHA (wetlands and ESA listed species habitat) that means the LCP is out of date.

There are two causes of landslides on the Big Sur coast - manmade and natural. Natural landslides are dwarfed by the frequency and mass of Landslides caused by Highway one. My estimate, after observing the Big Sur coast for some 30 years, is that certainly more than 90 percent and probably more than 95 percent are caused by the cuts made for Highway one.

Dumping or placing landslide debris at any coastal location other than one which there is no drainage into the ocean ignores the long term certainty that

4

the debris will erode into the ocean. This impact was entirely missed and should be analyzed.

4

The inevitable erosion of the dump piles into streams and the ocean will cause increases in siltation and sedimentation of both, and increases in non-point source water pollution from the asphalt in the highway roadbed that will be part of the debris. These need to be studied - not ignored because of the huge amounts of material involved.

The debris which erodes into the ocean will directly harm the most sensitive part of the land and the sea - the ecotone. Ecotones have far more biodiversity than areas away from an edge. This needs to be recognized and carefully analyzed. (i.e. how could this harm the food sources for the listed Southern Sea Otter?)

5

Gathering and trucking the debris will cause significant aesthetic impacts including noise, air pollution (especially from diesel trucks), visual (trucks are not what I want to view in Big Sur) and traffic congestion. None of these potentially significant environmental impacts were sufficiently analyzed.

6

Placing the dirt will -

- cause long term particulate air pollution from placing unprotected dirt berms in areas directly blown by strong coastal winds;

7

- cause water pollution when placed directly in streams (as at Point Sur)

8

- block views causing aesthetic losses and aesthetic harm as dirt berms between highway one and the ocean would not be attractive (especially at Point Sur and Garrapata).

9

Placing dirt in wetlands and in waters of the US is -
1)would require a Clean Water Act permit - if it was legal, and
2)prohibited by the Calif. Coastal Act in any case.

We suspect vernal pools still exist in a few of the locations

We are not pleased that you have narrowed the scope of the potential areas to place the debris to the Big Sur Coast.

Because of the probable significant environmental impacts we insist (as does CEQA) you find and evaluate Offsite alternatives (i.e. beyond the area delineated by the slides). We request you find locations out of the Coastal Zone which are physically isolated from watercourses, and also analyze using the landfills in Marina, Johnson Canyon, Crazy Horse etc.
With all due respect,

10

David Dilworth, Co-Chair

Do You Yahoo!?

Talk to your friends online with Yahoo! Messenger.

3 February, 2000

Dear Aileen:

Regarding the proposed dirt disposal sites along Highway 1:

Though it is necessary to create some interim use disposal sites, it is premature to establish permanent land-based disposal as an answer to disposal needs without further study. Just as the Marine Sanctuary has rejected ocean disposal as unnatural, so it is necessary to question the proposed land disposal. Recontouring upland or seaward land forms with mounds of earth invites policy conflicts, and interrupts natural processes. Reshaping the natural contour of this coast should not be undertaken lightly.

1

An example of the potential for abuse for such a dirt disposal plan is what happened at the Point Sur Naval Base in 1998, when Hurricane Point was being reshaped. Berming is no more permissible than is the planting of trees to screen development in the critical viewshed of Highway 1; however, dirt from Hurricane Point was used to begin to build berms at the Naval Base. These proposed berms would have been in sharp contrast to the natural topography of this marine terrace, and totally inappropriate in this highly scenic area. The future use of the Naval Base with its prominent position in the critical viewshed had not been determined. These berms, acting as screens, would clearly have prejudiced future development on that site.

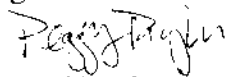
The Marine Sanctuary will need studies to guide their decision about dirt disposal along the coast. It would be appropriate to facilitate a combined study, which would consider ocean disposal that would approximate the natural disposition patterns historically established by the geomorphology of the coast. This sort of study, done by a well regarded third party, would give a basis for meaningful and informed discussions to begin.

2

Another Highway development which has not had adequate study or discussion, and yet is proceeding ahead, is the "draping" of rock fall sections of the coast. Since the LCP's highest priority is retaining the coast in its natural and pristine state, to create such installations without reference to the Cal Trans safety index, County review of critical viewshed impacts, much less steering committee discussions, is inappropriate.

3

Regards,



CoastWatch
P.O. Box 635
Big Sur
Calif. 93920
(831) 667-2261 fax

CW

26 January, 2000

To: Aileen Loe
Caltrans Environmental Planning
(805)549-3077

From: Tim Green
Peggy Taylor
CoastWatch
(831)667-2261 fax

Re: Disposal site for dirt at Point Sur Naval Facility

The three proposed berms at Point Sur Naval Facility (P.M. 53.8), covering 3.1 acres, will have significant impacts on the critical view shed of the Big Sur coast which cannot be mitigated. The primary recreation of the coast, as defined by the LCP, is scenic. The LCP states that there shall be no development in the scenic view shed. The proposed berms would create a screen for future development. Screening for development in the critical view shed is contrary to the policies of the LCP. Therefore, these berms will prejudice in favor of future development in the critical view shed. The creation of these berms constitutes development in the critical view shed, and in this highly scenic area, on the west side of Highway 1, must be considered an unmitigatable, significant impact.

4

Jeff Norman
P. O. Box 15
Big Sur, CA 93920
(831) 667-2815
messages: (831) 667-0105
10 February 2000

Aileen K. Loe, Project Manager, Coast Highway Management Plan
Caltrans District 5
50 Higuera St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RE: Initial Study, "Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair..." in Big Sur. December, 1999.

Dear Aileen:

Thanks for the copy of the Initial Study, and for the excellent public meeting you conducted on January 28th in Big Sur. I'll recap some of the concerns we spoke about at that meeting.

Two simple items involve the mapping of the Gurries site, which should be shown *south* of Garrapata Creek and north of Kasler Point. The other item regards the spelling of the Tree Bones site: it's "Bones," plural. 2,2

Of far more importance are concerns regarding environmental impacts, detailed below.

Tree Bones: This site contains a "0.65-acre seasonal pond," which supports amphibian breeding. There is also ample habitat for Smith's blue butterfly, with the presence of seacliff buckwheat. These resources are sufficient, in my opinion, to disqualify the site. But the Initial Study doesn't refer to other likely sensitive resources which the site could support. These resources include La Graciosa thistle (*Cirsium loncholepis*), a candidate for Federally-endangered listing which has been found ca. one-half mile from the site, in comparable habitat; and the Federally-threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), which can breed under circumstances similar to those found at the pond. No negative declaration is made for these taxa, and on-site protocol surveying for them should be conducted (or described in the document, if such work has been done). 3

The Initial Study does not include conferral with U. S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), which regards the disturbance of a single seacliff buckwheat plant to be the equivalent of the taking of Smith's blue butterfly. The Tree Bones site is located on Los Padres National Forest, and USFWS has jurisdiction. 4

1983 Extension: This site evidently includes riparian habitat, and may support California red-legged frog, which is present under very similar conditions at Pt. Piedras Blancas in San Luis Obispo

County. The site contains stands of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), which constitute Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest, a State-listed rare plant community. The dunes seaward of the site may also be breeding areas for the Federally-threatened Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), which is known to nest nearby.

Gurries: This site also supports riparian habitat, which could include Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest, and California red-legged frog. Although only a few seacliff buckwheat plants were observed, Smith's blue butterfly should be assumed present. The butterfly has been documented from sites within 100 yds. of Gurries.

Garrapata Sites: Again, these sites support riparian habitat, which includes Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest. California red-legged frog could be present. Seacliff buckwheat occurs here, and Smith's blue butterfly has been documented within one-half mile of these sites.

I question the overall adequacy of surveys done for sensitive plant and animal taxa. But even if the resources were limited to those mentioned in the Initial Study (and if all the suggested mitigations worked perfectly), I would question the need to sacrifice these sensitive habitats and associated species for the sake of a contingency plan. I believe that a more careful search needs to be conducted. There are certainly many more places which are the environmental equivalents of the Willow Springs and Pt. Sur sites.

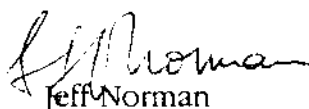
5

The use of numerous (and perhaps sensitive) sites for spoils disposal can also lead to a "green light" for repair projects comparable to Sycamore Draw, Julia Pfeiffer Burns, and Hurricane Point. When I became involved with the Steering Committee for the Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP), I hoped for an integration of local people's disapproval of "over-engineering" into the CHMP guidelines. The overall level of Caltrans projects on Highway 1 is accelerating, with a resultant drastic and measurable loss of esthetic qualities. The CHMP was held out as a means of avoiding such outcomes, but, so far, it appears to be an enabling document for this process.

In summary, I recommend performing adequate biotic surveying before a Negative Declaration can be made for the Initial Study. Also, conferral should have occurred with California Department of Fish and Game and USFWS before the publication of the Initial Study. A more extensive search must be conducted for sites which are not biologically-sensitive. Finally, I believe that the use of environmentally-appropriate disposal sites be made *only* for maintenance and other small-scale needs—*not* for massive stabilization jobs. The study must not provide a legitimized means for Caltrans to create more huge, "incurable" roadcuts, as at Julia Pfeiffer Burns. If such solutions appeal to Caltrans in the future, they should go through the CEQA process, with full public input and review. Anything else resembles a panic response.

6

Sincerely,


Jeff Norman



"Barbara Woyt" <pulses@earthlink.net> on 02/10/2000 10:11:42 PM

To: Aileen Loe/D05/Caltrans/CAGov

cc:

Subject: disposal sites

:

Initial Study -Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair

Having participated in the planning process for the much anticipated management plan; read this document; visited the sites and attended the open house....I have come full circle to simply not understanding why or exactly what is this Negative Declaration.

What happened to the Coast Highway Management Plan??? the whole picture ... the development of criteria with which to approach such issues as disposal sites...the tools with which to weigh the impacts... the perspective with which to proceed in an orderly manner with some form of consensus or at an least informed group of shareholders?

How can Caltrans suddenly revert to business as it has always been done and declare an in-house negative dec on a few sites on a limited issue based on a list of generic mitigations in a one size fits all attempt to go dump dirt .

If this process were really at the point of beginning to choose sites , having established the methodology through a completed management plan, I would expect the smaller grouping of sites to be arranged by similarity of characteristics. This grouping is so disparate as to render one ineffectual in dealing with its inconsistent scope of attributes.

* there is a vernal pool site --one of maybe one or two on this whole coast. Rare and hopefully protected. This study does not consider the specific geological, hydrological, biological basis for why this phenomena occurs at this site. It does not consider the natural processes of which it is the manifestation . The mitigations are a band-aid to hide the fact that dumping dirt here will destroy this natural phenomena. At the open house , I listened to one of the Caltrans team bemoan a biologist's view of this site because it was his favorite because it would probably take even more cubic yards than estimated. I recount this exchange as evidence to you, ladies and gentleman of your own jury on yourselves, that the negative declaration is the result of the necessarily myopic vision of your interests...and that this situation is exactly the sort for which Environmental Impact Reviews were invented. Not to make your job more difficult but to provide third party oversight on these situations. This function of the environmental protections we have developed are very consistent with the commitment to an comprehensive Highway Management Plan. Why are you flying in the face of the obvious?

1

*the Pt. Sur and Garrapata sites are characterised by their cooperative component with future development projects of the State Park system. These projects are not in permit process...they are very controversial...have deep impacts and implications for the future of this coast (and I for one would love to have a satisfactory Highway Management Plan completed before tackling these weighty issues) . Why...why ... why... would this team of Caltrans planners jeopardize their credibility with the many allies willing and able to help with the long term planning

2

process by participating in such jump-the-gun activities?

Imagine that the management plan has been completed...and we know the total disposal sites and their capacity...and thus know what percentage these sites represent ... And that all disposal alternatives are on the table and feasibility of each has been established (including a thorough investigation of how much ocean disposal could occur) and that a triage /prioritization could be established ...maybe just imagine that in the light of the whole picture that it could be concluded that the best use of the limited coastal sites was for resident crews to use them for standard clean-ups ...for highest quality oversight of the environmental concerns ... for the most efficient use of a limited resource...for perhaps even the most cost efficient use of the coastal sites ...that use for huge catastrophic events would be wasteful ..what if? We do not presently have the data to even ask the right questions . How can a "less than significant impact" verdict be passed on any sites at this point ? It is premature and counter to the effort upon which the shareholders had embarked.

3

There is nothing in this initial study that compares the cost of use of these sites plus successful revegetation and associated monitoring plus rehabilitation of access roads after heavy truck use with the cost of just taking the material away to start with. The cost/benefit ratios and comparisons are essential to the decision process.

4

Both in the document we have been reviewing and in answer to my question at the open house meeting, it was pointed out that at the time of actually using the site, there would be additional regulatory agency permits to protect these sites. It seems to me that the most thorough environmental standards should be exercised at this , the front end of the process and not overweight the emergency,"catastrophic event" end of the process with these concerns which are vital to this unique coastal area. And thorough to me means EIRs for these sites with no short cuts of negative declarations...its just not the nature of the work at hand.

Private sector projects in these places would be scrutinized by means of EIR's. The latitude in state law that protects public agencies from third party oversight has resulted in the shortcomings which now need to be addressed. With regard to CalTrans, the methods of the past have been judged wanting, inadequate, inappropriate, ineffectual, piece-meal, harmful and UGLIFYING.

First, a comprehensive Highway Management Plan.....then disposal sites and the permits to use them.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.. keep working ..this is going to be a fine effort for years into the future when it is completed.



- att1.htm

February 8, 2000

Aileen Loe
Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans, District 5
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, California
93401

Dear Aileen,

This letter is concerning the Initial Study of December 1, 2000.

Page 29, Site 1

Comment that "continuing erosion of bank detracts from the viewshed" .
This statement may reflect a value judgment as opposed to reality, the Grand Canyon is perhaps the greatest erosion on earth but not necessarily detracting.

1

Page 62

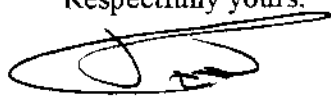
Transportation / Traffic

Does not adequately address the impact on the local population that has to commute to town , whether it is school children , workers or those just needing to go period.

2

Good luck .

Respectfully yours.



Ken Wright



rita t <aframebigsur@yahoo.com> on 02/11/2000 05:28:25 PM

To: Aileen_Loe@dot.ca.gov
cc:
Subject: Big Sur Landslide Disposal Comments

Feb 11 2000

To Cal-Trans

Comments on: Big Sur Landslide Dirt Dumping

I object to this project and to the Initial Study and Negative Declaration. I request you prepare an EIR because of the individual and cumulative significant environmental impacts.

1

My objections are based on the following :

1. Berms

There are two main reasons that I find berms offensive. The way Cal-trans has distributed these berms along the ocean side of Highway One blocks the view and creates the inevitable circumstance of the soil being washed into the ocean which ultimately endangers the National Marine Sanctuary.

2

2. Wetlands

The Coastal Act forbids disruption of any wetlands that are located on the coast of California. With a broader definition of wetlands than the Clean Water Act, these wetlands can be seasonal or permanent. There are sites within your Initial proposal that would destroy some of these areas (i.e. Garrapata site 6).

3

3. Landfill

Instead of the earth being distributed all over Big Sur coast and disrupting this incredible natural environment I want you to consider having it used for landfill for arenas outside of this area.

4

4. Landslide Prevention

Has there been any such investigation geared toward landslide severity and/or prevention.? I would appreciate dollars being spent in this area instead of proposals to redistribute soil where it will be creating the very problems it is being moved around to prevent.

5

Please analyze a Landslide Prevention Alternative.

5. Please also analyze a Landslide Prevention Alternative in conjunction with offsite disposal.

Thank you for being interested and concerned and planning for adequate disposal approaches for the future. Thank you also for making my road life possible here on the Big Sur coast. Its truly amazing how you keep the roads open so I can carry on my business and my life.

Sincerely,

Rita Thangaraj
POB 192
Big Sur, CA 93920

Do You Yahoo!?
Talk to your friends online with Yahoo! Messenger.
<http://im.yahoo.com>



rita t <aframebigsur@yahoo.com> on 02/11/2000 06:35:44 PM

To: Aileen_Loe@dot.ca.gov
cc:
Subject: Big Sur Landslide Dirt Dumping

Feb 11 2000

To Cal-Trans

Comments on: Big Sur Landslide Dirt Dumping

I object to this project and the Initial Study and Negative Declaration and request you prepare an EIR for the potential impacts on the ESA listed Smith's Blue butterfly.

In discussing the impacts to the plants used for the Endangered Butterfly, you completely forgot the potential impacts to the butterflies themselves!

Large, noisy, smelly trucks dumping dirt adjacent to the butterfly habitat can impact the butterflies who necessarily fly to and from the plants. The noise can cause them to abandon their homes, the air pollution from diesel exhaust and dust kicked up by trucks or strong coastal winds could kill or injure them.

Further, killing the plants, even accidentally, is prohibited by the Coastal Act.

Please avoid dumping dirt near any butterfly habitat by at least one hundred meters.

Thank you sincerely,

Richard Ravich
POB 428
Big Sur, CA 93920

Do You Yahoo!?
Talk to your friends online with Yahoo! Messenger.
<http://im.yahoo.com>

TO: Aileen Loe
CALTRANS DIST. 5

From - 831-667 0101

1-27-00

Dear Aileen, Did my E-MAIL get to you?

Thank you for your tremendous
work on the INITIAL STUDY for
STREAM DAMAGE disposal for Big Sur.

The Coast Watch position which
is in conflict with this study is specifically
regarding the Pt. Sur Naval Facility.

The STATE of Calif. through the STATE
Parks has promised the community of
Big Sur and the larger public that all
plans for the property would come before
the public in a master plan for comment
and review before the County Permit process.

Adding any material or terms ahead
of these procedures would prejudice the
outcome of those proceedings and is against
our L.C.P. Please omit this site from
your plans. Thank you,

Chappellet Studios *Sybil Chappellet*



Magnus Torén <magnus@henrymiller.org> on 01/27/2000 06:41:32 AM

To: aileen_loe@dot.ca.gov
cc:
Subject: Naval Station, Big Sur

Dear Aileen,

The former Naval Station is located in one of the most sensitive and treasured parts of the Big Sur coast known as the "lighthouse flats"

Please keep in mind that the public enjoys the natural vistas more than any other aspect of this coast.

Any suggestion that would involve dumping of material within the critical viewshed would be a violation of the Big Sur Coastal Plan.

The public spent 11 million dollars (from Prop. 70 money) to protect the viewshed in this area, to keep it "wild and rural." It would be devastating for the public trust in their State representatives if development were to take place in the very area they've worked so hard to preserve.

Please do not allow the Highway Management Plan to include any development in this sensitive area. It would set a very damaging precedent.

Thank You.

Magnus Torén
member of
Big Sur CoastWatch
POB 25, Big Sur
93920
Henry Miller Library
Highway One
Big Sur, CA 93930
ph/fax 831-667-2574
Open Thursday - Sunday 11AM - 6PM
Jesus it's a cockeyed world.
Let's have more of it! Henry Miller
<http://www.henrymiller.org>

1



dezkgx@juno.com on 01/11/2000 09:24:15 AM

To: Aileen Loe/D05/Caltrans/CAGov

cc:

Subject: Cal Trans disposal site

:

I am writing to you because I am deeply concerned about the proposed plan for a soil dumping site near wetlands in Monterey County. These wetlands are beautiful, delicate ecosystems that cannot survive with this kind of human intervention. Any foreign soil or debris will have a dramatic effect on these areas. Think about the lowest members of the food chain, bacteria. This causes certain algae which is only one of the basic elements to wetlands. This system is so balanced that any disruption can destroy it from the bottom up. So many animals depend on these wetlands for food and their homes. Most of the natural wetlands that were thriving in California have already been destroyed. We need to do all we can to preserve the wetlands we have left. Please, find an alternative to this plan.

Erin Bloomfield
DEZKGX@juno.com

1

Comments on the Initial Study: Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair

Highway 1 near Big Sur

FIRST: Berms are constructed too high. Unless in truck or bus, ocean view is blocked. This should not be so.

1

SECOND: Terrible idea to man clear area in front of Point Sur with new dirt mounds! Please ~~Not~~

2

Third: I think wherever you are planning to put all that soil - it will wash into wetlands, streams and sea -

3

KAYE ANDRES Box 95 Big Sur CA 93920

Name

Address

City/State

Zip

e-mail

Deposit comment card at Open House--or mail to Caltrans, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Attn: Aileen Loe

LAW OFFICES OF
HORAN, LLOYD, KARACHALE, DYER, SCHWARTZ,
LAW & COOK
INCORPORATED

P.O. BOX 3350, MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93942-3350

LAWRENCE P. HORAN
FRANCIS P. LLOYD
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STEPHEN W. DYER
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MARK A. BLUM
MARK A. O'CONNOR
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ROBERT E. ARNOLD III
ELIZABETH C. GIANOLA

JAMES J. COOK
DENNIS M. LAW

January 27, 2000

TELEPHONE: (831) 375-4131
FROM SALINAS: (831) 757-4131
FACSIMILE: (831) 373-8302

Our File No. 0017.57

VIA FACSIMILE: (805) 549-3077

EMAIL: Aileen.Low@dot.ca.gov

Aileen K. Loe, Project Manager
Coast Highway Management Plan
State of California
Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415

RE: Initial Study - Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair
Highway One Near Big Sur

Dear Ms. Loe:

Thank you for sending me a review copy of the December 1999 Initial Study for the Storm Damage Repair Disposal Site Project, an element of the Coast Highway Management Plan. On behalf of the El Sur Ranch, I offer the following comments for your consideration.

Without commenting on the appropriateness of a negative declaration as opposed to an environmental impact report, I note that there is an ambiguity in the project description which could undermine the defensibility of a negative declaration if not corrected. The project description reads: "This project proposes to designate disposal sites for soil and debris generated by naturally occurring events" The "designation" of sites is different from the "approval" of disposal sites. Elsewhere (e.g., Page 16 Paragraph II.D) the Initial Study states "Approval of this project will allow for the designated sites to be used for disposal on demand." The project description should clarify whether the project is merely the designation of sites or the pre-approval of sites for disposal.

The Point Sur Naval Facility (P.M 53.8) is a recommended disposal site in the Big Sur maintenance area. The El Sur Ranch strongly opposes the deposit of fill material on this site on several grounds which tie to the Initial Study. The present Naval Facility was constructed on land gifted to the federal government by the El Sur Ranch. The federal government is currently in negotiations with the State of California for the transfer of the Naval Facility to the State Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"). This prospective transfer has been the subject of much discussion

Aileen K. Loe, Project Manager
State of California
Department of Transportation
January 27, 2000
Page 2

before the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Committee ("BSMAAC"). The minutes of the meetings of the BSMAAC reflect numerous demands by the residents of Big Sur that the State of California would ultimately eliminate all structures at the Naval Facility. (Foundation slabs and access roads would remain for emergency purposes.) The State Department of Parks and Recreation assured the committee that it would eliminate all structures, except that it wished to retain a facility to be converted or constructed as a visitor center. Big Sur residents oppose this use. After the transfer from the federal government to the DPR and before any development could be constructed, it has been clearly stated by DPR to the BSMAAC and the public that the State of California will adopt a master plan for the entire facility, and that any project approvals within the facility pursuant to the master plan will be subject to the permit authority of the County of Monterey.

2

This Initial Study project description suggests that berming could be approved for the Naval Facility under the rubric of this disposal site project prior to overall planning for the Naval Facility. Such an occurrence would be inconsistent with the understanding of the BSMAAC premised on the representations of the State of California.

Disposal of any material at the Naval Facility to be utilized for visual screening berms would be inconsistent with the visual resource policies of the Big Sur Area Land Use Plan and the implementing ordinances contained in the Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan. Moreover, to the extent that approvals for berming occur as a part of this disposal site project, they might be cited as justification to leave in place facilities which otherwise would be in the public viewshed and subject to removal (per the State's representations to the BSMAAC). Such potential consequences need to be identified in the Initial Study as potentially adverse impacts. More specifically, this component of the project could result in a land use and planning impact under Section 4.b) of the Initial Study, i.e., the project may "conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect."

3

The Initial Study does not identify, either in the recommended sites or alternatives still under consideration, the potential for stockpiling disposal material at two locations on the El Sur Ranch which are presently used as stockpiles for Cal-Trans disposal materials. The stockpile site at the Little Sur River accommodates 50,000 to 60,000 yards of material, while the stockpile at Dairy Canyon accepts approximately 10,000 yards of material. Although these sites presently have Cal-Trans disposal materials on them from the 1998 event, this material will be utilized elsewhere on the El Sur Ranch and these stockpile sites will again be available for disposal, either in their present locations or in modified configurations. Accordingly, we request their inclusion as recommended sites in the CEQA project description.

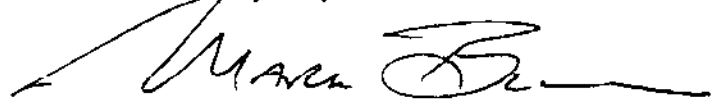
4

Aileen K. Loe, Project Manager
State of California
Department of Transportation
January 27, 2000
Page 3

West Moro ditch was a short-listed site proposed for 20,000 cubic yards of material on the El Sur Ranch, but was not recommended. East Moro ditch was also considered. Inasmuch as neither site was rejected, we assume that they both remain alternative sites still under consideration. Our understanding is that the Moro ditch sites were not recommended sites because of regulatory considerations (e.g., potential difficulty of obtaining Regional Water Quality Control Board permits or waivers). However, it appears that other sites were recommended with environmental conditions quite similar to Moro ditch, in that they occupy very similar eroded drainage courses which carry intermittent storm water flows. See for example, Gurries Area B and Garrapata 1, 3 and 5. Garrapata 5 in particular, where Cal-Trans has already extended a culvert and placed 45,000 cubic yards of fill in a gully, is nearly identical to the El Sur Ranch proposal for the Moro ditches, except that Garrapata 5 took more fill. The Bullpen is another completed project with no discernable difference from the Moro ditches. Consequently, we urge inclusion of the Moro ditch sites as recommended sites in the CEQA project description.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Yours very truly,



Mark A. Blum

MAB:mh

cc: James J. Hill, III
Lygia Chappellet
Tim Green
Supervisor Dave Potter

HIGHWAY LETTERS LOE - INITIAL STUDY L-1

RONALD J. GURRIES

Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	1/26	# of pages	2
To	S. Hendrickson		From	RJC	
Co./Dept.			Co.		
Phone #			Phone #		
Fax #	3297		Fax #		

State of Calif.
Dept. of Transportation

GILROY, CALIFORNIA 95020
(408) 842-2838

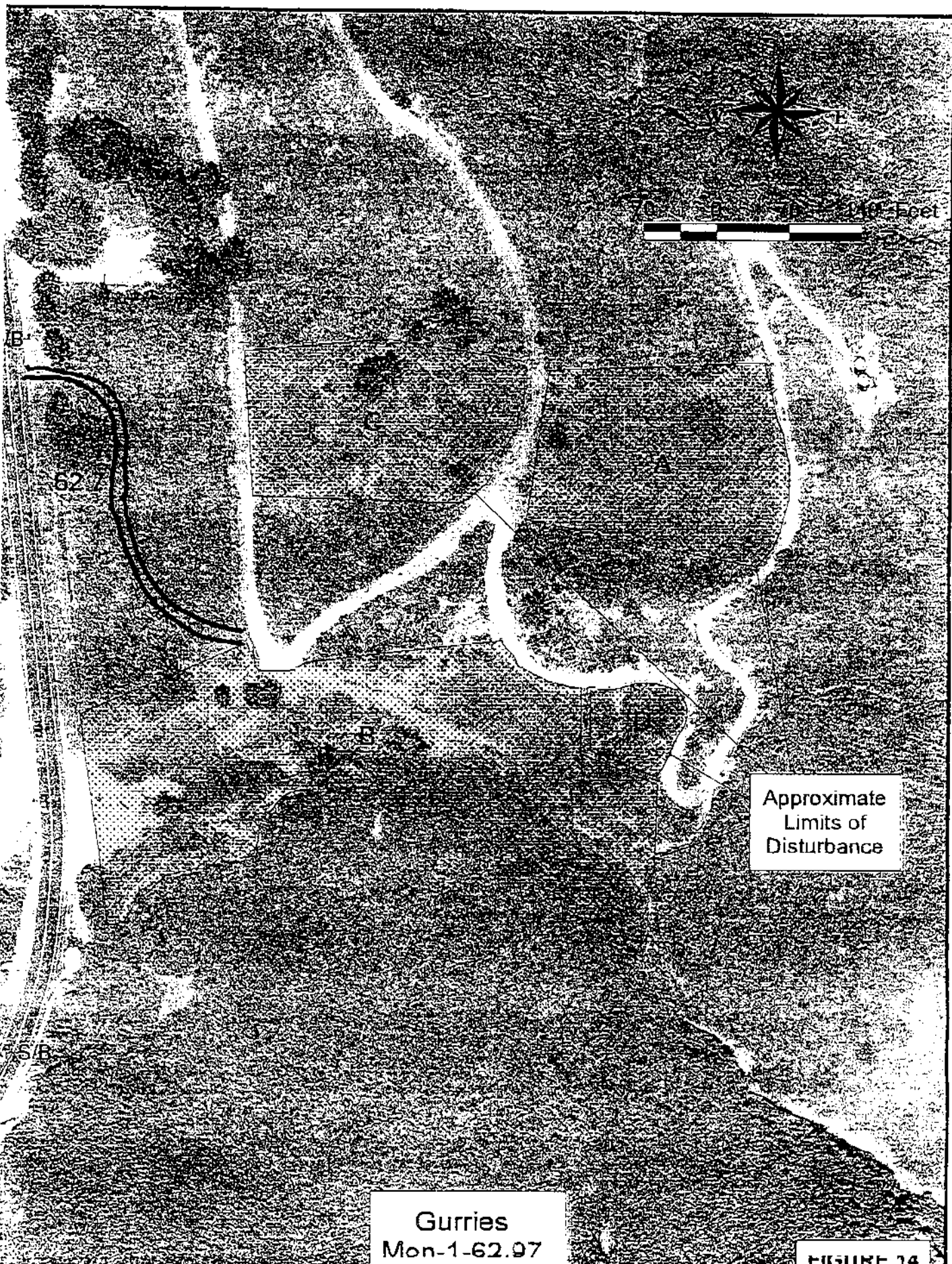
Attn. Aileen Loe

In reference to your initial Study of December, 1989, the Gurries Site would require a separate entrance from Highway 1 from the existing site that is utilized by the soon to be renovated home.

On an enclosed copy of your Figure 14 I have drawn a black Felt Pen line where I feel an unobtrusive driveway could be constructed between the existing trees and brush.

If you have any questions, please call at above phone #.

Ronald J. Gurries
Pg. 1 of 2



Approximate
Limits of
Disturbance

Gurries
Mon-1-62.97

FIGURE 14



"Martha Diehl" <mvdiehl@mindspring.com> on 02/10/2000 04:29:26 PM

To: <Aileen_Loe@dot.ca.gov>
cc:
Subject: Re: Hwy 1 debris disposal plan comments

Aileen:

Ken and I have as usual waited until the very last minute.... I hope it's not too late! (You didn't think we'd forgotten you, did you?) We've pasted them into the e-mail, and I'm also attaching them so you can get such format as there is if you can read the attachment.

Martha

Comments follow:

10 February 2000

Aileen Loe
Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans, District 5
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Aileen:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study of Disposal Sites for Storm Damage Repair for Highway 1 near Big Sur. As residents of the South Coast area we travel along Highway 1 daily and are concerned about the efforts to maintain and repair the highway, as well as protect the unique qualities of this area. The following are comments and questions that we have prepared after reviewing the Initial Study and attending the presentation in Big Sur last month.

General comments and questions:

Continued review of the study and the Coastal Highway Management Plan by local residents is critical to producing a plan that will best address the process used to maintain the highway. Question: Will there be other opportunities to comment on the plan for disposal sites for the storm damage? How will persons whether or not they are listed as interested parties be kept aware of plans and progress of operations at these disposal sites?

1

The view from the highway is important to almost all the interests in the area, both residents and commercial interests. We hope that any future disposal area will not compromise any views along the highway or the ability of motorists to pull off the road and to enjoy the unique view. Questions: Will there be a clear policy for Caltrans personnel to preserve the current views and turnout spots when they select disposal sites? Will there be a clear policy to keep the piles of disposal material low enough in height and with a naturally contoured appearance so that no more views are lost or compromised? We ask this because there are several disposal sites from 1998 near the 66-mile mark that were filled above the road level and have blocked views because they are too high. Two of these sites in particular appear to be at least 3 feet in height and deep enough to greatly reduce the quality of the ocean view. Are these temporary? If so, how long will "temporary" mean in these cases? Will there be a reforming of these spots (1998) to regain a more natural appearance and return the view? Will there be a guideline to make the final contour of future disposal sites blend more

2

3

naturally with the original slope contours? In addition, can we work towards filling in pull-off areas that do not provide a safe way for people to re-enter the highway?

3

The geological makeup of the Coastal zone is very different from one location to the next. Will there to be a study to determined if there will be adverse affects to the local native plants and animals (both on land and in the water) if debris, dirt and rocks from one geological zone with distinctly different pH is placed in another geological zone? We understand that consideration has been given to avoiding introduction of non-local species of plants. What about the effect on the water that passes through rock of a new type? Will this cause any changes in the critical near-shore ocean habitat where the water enters the ocean, as for example in Abalone Cove just seaward of the proposed Gurries' disposal site?

4

Specific Comments:

The proposed Gurries disposal area contains some very steep topology and a seasonal stream or wash that runs through the proposed dump disposal site. Moreover, it is situated above a very scenic cove (Abalone Cove). This area, which is very near the Garrapata Creek Bridge, is in close proximity to several homes. We are concerned that long-term operations will cause disruption to local residents due to noise, trash and high levels of activity. Questions: What types of operation will occur at that site? Will there be equipment storage, ongoing construction or a constant or frequent personnel presence here? Will there be safeguards to ensure these operations don't disturb local residents? Can we insure that there are no problems with great volumes of uncontrolled trash as we have seen over the last year and a half with the construction crews at the Bixby Creek Bridge earthquake retrofit site? Will this area be frequently or constantly in use by maintenance personnel? Will there be some sort of permanent or semi-permanent office? For example, the "temporary" trailer on the turnout by the Granite Canyon Fish and Game Marine Station used by Caltrans and contractors personnel as office space has remained there for over two years so far. Has a study looked at the environmental damage that could be caused if a large amount of disposal material washes either into Abalone Cove or across the highway? Finally, how can local residents contact the appropriate person to discuss or report activity that seems inconsistent with the final guidelines that will be published with the highway plan?

5

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Again, thank you for providing us with the opportunity to make our comments on the initial study. We are very interested in participating in the continued development of this plan and would be happy to elaborate further on our comments, if necessary.

Best regards,

Kenneth Ekelund
kennye@redhifft.com

and

Martha Diehl
mvdiehl@mindspring.com

Garrapata Trout Farm
35811 Highway 1
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 625-9621



"Martha Diehl" <mvdiehl@mindspring.com> on 02/10/2000 04:42:06 PM

To: <Aileen_Loe@dot.ca.gov>
cc:
Subject: Additional comment on Hwy 1 debris disposal plan

Aileen:

I forgot to ask about trees. If we provide 2' of appropriate topsoil over non-site-appropriate debris (as for example local granitic soil over debris from Hurricane Point at the Ghurries' site), doesn't this set-up mean that there can never be any very large native plants that become established there? My gardening experience tends to suggest that if a tree doesn't have roots of MUCH more than 2 feet in depth, it'll blow over after it dies of drought. Also if a plant sends roots down 2 feet and then hits limestone it isn't expecting, it'll die right then. This solution may prevent inappropriate seeds from being imported, but doesn't it also prevent native plants from becoming established? And aren't these the very kinds of plants that will help stabilize an area in the long run - as for example when the site has eventually been filled to capacity and is then left to revert to a natural state?

Thanks again,
Martha